

# ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Draft Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> October 2012 at 7pm in Ardgay Hall

**Present: Elected members:** David Laver, Acting Chair (DL), Peter Armstrong, Secretary (PA), Alan Lawrence, Treasurer (AL), Phil Olson (PO), Marion Turner (MT), Betty Wright (BW)

**Also present:** Highland Councillor George Farlow (GF)

**Members of the public:** Theresa Langley

**Minutes Secretary:** Mary Goulder (MG)

**Apologies:** David Hannah, Chair (DH) and Bob Sendall (BS)

**Item 1. Welcome.** In the absence of David Hannah, the Chair was assumed by David Laver as previously arranged. Best wishes to Bob for a speedy recovery following his accident were noted.

**Item 2. Apologies.** As above.

**Item 3. Police report.** No Police representative present and no report submitted.

**Item 4. Minutes of last meeting.** The Minutes of the September meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record following two amendments: in Item 1 'MPs' should read 'MSPs'; in Item 18 additional sentences were added: 'A local contractor was approached but refused to take on the work due to the high costs of public liability insurance. The CC also considered undertaking the work but similarly felt the public liability should not be accepted.'

Adoption of the amended Minutes was proposed by Marion Turner; seconded by Betty Wright.

**Item 5. Matters arising. (1) Service bus to Asda/Tain swimming pool.** No response as yet to the CC's letter. **(2)**

**Clach Eiteag repair.** AL reports this is in hand. **(3) Local facilities for glass recycling.** CC's letter has been acknowledged but no further information. **(4) Disabled access at station.** It has been ascertained that 110 yards would be required, proving impractical and too expensive for ScotRail to undertake. PA advised that consideration is being given to running a mid-morning train which would stop at Culrain. It was stated at the meeting that this should not be at the expense of an existing service. Current timetables allow for the operational requirements of single line working and utilisation of 'loops'. Caithness appears to be benefitting greatly with funding, in part at least from the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA). Cllr Farlow advised that he is already in communication with Nigel Low, Head of Programming at NDA and will discuss the funding of a new loop at Ardgay. Trains carrying decommissioned material will be passing through the village so the matter is relevant as relatively small operating expenditure by the NDA in creating passing loops further south would aid the NDA in scheduling its trains and would greatly enhance the service available to travellers. **GF Action.**

**Item 6. Correspondence. (1) Community Council Insurance.** Secretary advised that a new form must be completed and returned to Highland Council although the current policy remains in effect until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012. PA was asked to ascertain in writing from HC exactly what the insurance covers. **(2) Ward boundaries.** Responses are coming in to the CC letter which proposed a change to smaller single-member wards in areas with vast distances. One suggestion received is to submit the letter also to the Electoral Reform Society. **(3) Windfarm information.** Carol Shaw from Gledfield School Parent Council has requested a list of windfarms. Secretary will reply accordingly but also direct her to the CC website which has information available. **PA Action (3).**

**Item 7. Oakwood Place/Ardgay Hill footpath.** A letter on this issue has been received from Mrs Rhonwen Copley. David Hannah had asked that this item be held over to the November meeting. It was agreed to do so and to invite allow Mrs Copley to attend. **PA Action/Agenda item.**

**Item 8. Windfarms update.** Ardgay representatives have met with those from Edderton, Ardross and Creich with regard to the community benefit from the proposed **Coire na Cloiche** development. A meeting will now take place with the developers, verbal agreement having been reached. The four community councils hope to meet with the developer. **Glenmorrie.** Verbal agreement also achieved. The Chair asked how many windfarms are operational in this district – currently four with another five proposed. The **Achany Panel** has now been renamed as the Kyle of Sutherland Panel (serving the areas of Ardgay, Creich and Lairg). **SSE** has taken community benefit matters 'In House' and is working on a management model. At the invitation of **Bettyhill CC**, DH and MT attended a meeting there to discuss Ardgay's various aspects of handling of community benefit issues.

**Item 9. KOSDT update.** No monthly report available. Lynsey Burns will be leaving her post at the end of the year. Funding is currently being sought to maintain the Development Officer post for the next two years. Free Hall slots are available at present. The kids Saturday film club is ready to launch. Cycling Club developments are proceeding.

The Development Plan is under review. Ardgay Kyle of Sutherland welcome signs have been made, awaiting Planning Permission to erect. The signs are not bilingual. Cllr Farlow reminded the CC that funding is available for new English/Gaelic signage; all new HC signs will be in both languages.

**Item 10. Treasurer's report.** The Treasurer's Account balance stands at £1886.57 with outstanding liabilities of £135.00; Projects Account at £3954.47 with outstanding cheques of £465.61. The Toilets Account, with a loan of £500 from the Projects Account, stands at £232.65 with one outstanding cheque for £189. Highland Council's grant for running costs has yet to be received. Recent donations for the Newsletter amount to £7.00, with a further donation being received tonight. Taking into account the expected receipts from billed advertising, the Newsletter is now £55 in arrears. (Projects account.)

**Item 11. Newsletter – donations.** See mention in Item 10 above.

**Item 12. Community Trust to allow purchase of assets.** In principal Community Councils are advised not to hold assets but a Community Interest Company, set up by the CC could do so. Existing groups, e.g. KOSDT, might be better able to deal with any such issues; significant costs are involved in having a CIC in place. Agreed to hold over further discussion till November meeting. **Agenda Item.**

**Item 13. Carbisdale Castle update.** SYHA has stated in the press that £4m - £6m will be required for repairs to the building. As a result the organisation may be forced to place the castle on the property market. The Chief Executive of SYHA has been invited to attend the November meeting of Creich CC; a representative from Ardgay should also attend.

**Item 14. Open Shop Week.** No arrangements in place but all agreed that further attempts to engage with the public must be made. Legislation requires CC to consult with their constituents. The Newsletter is an excellent form of communication, few others are known in the country, but it might not completely fulfil the obligations. Cllr Farlow stressed that as volunteers, CC members must find a balance with the public and should be careful not to take on too much. Identifying priorities is the best method. PA suggested having a CC member 'on duty' one morning a week in the hall. DL advised that the Hall Committee is facing a list of repairs to meet the legal requirements, in particular with regard to fire regulations and electrical ones. It hopes to be able to honour the present group bookings while repairs are carried out. CC representation at events in the hall was suggested as another possibility for public access to CCs. The Post Office currently operating within the hall is experiencing staffing difficulties which may place the service in jeopardy. The Hall Committee AGM falls on 29<sup>th</sup> October and all interested parties are encouraged to attend to show support for the ongoing running of the hall and to ensure communication with the Committee. If funding for repairs is to be sought by the Hall Committee from the various local community benefit funds any such applications will fare better if they show community consultation.

**Item 15. Remembrance Day.** The service this year falls on November 11<sup>th</sup>. Two wreaths are to be laid, one by the British Legion and one by the Community Council. Names were sought for an appropriate person from the village to do this. Steve Copley was suggested and BW agreed to ask him if he would be willing. As CC Chair it was proposed that David Hannah should be asked in reserve. **BW Action.**

**Item 16. Any other competent business. a. CC paperwork.** BW asked, in light of the vast amounts of paper now required at each meeting, if there might be a way to save the costs to individual members. Cllr Farlow advised that CC members are entitled to free copying of CC documents at the Service Point. PO wondered if members downloaded documents onto a memory stick would the Service Point have the capability to print from that?

**b. Core Path access/dog waste.** A local landowner has approached members of the CC to complain about access difficulties along a Core Path. As he is already in correspondence with the HC Access Officer, Matt Dent, it was suggested that he continue his discussions with THC to resolve the issue. Cllr Farlow agreed to speak to the Access Officer regarding this problem. **GF Action.** The local landowner is also concerned about dog walking, dog mess and its effect on livestock. It was suggested that if he can find some accurate factual material the CC could help publicise this. The Newsletter and notice boards can be used to promote more information. The erection of more dog waste bins might also help to alleviate the problem. **c. Christmas lights.** An update will be available in November. **d.**

**Public toilets.** Painting the floor of the toilets building is a very short term method of maintenance. HC should be asked to lay floor tiles. **GF Action.** **e. Tuiteam bridge.** Now taped off and deemed unsafe. No help forthcoming from HC on this important link for residents in Strathoykel, especially in times of flood. HC needs to take more note of local concerns. Cllr Farlow hoped that the new Area Committees will be able to do so. The CC and local groups should liaise with the Ward Manager on all issues requiring HC input. Approaching the Sutherland Partnership was

also suggested. Concern was raised over the lack of local government Highland Council spending in Sutherland and in Ardgay and Greich the Kyle of Sutherland in particular. The Development & Planning Department appears to be offering little service to this area compared to other areas, particularly Inverness . f. Theresa Langley was thanked for her attendance at the meeting. As a new resident she is interested in the area and hopes to attend future meetings. g. PA advised that Jeanie Sparling is now working in Inverness but she will continue to look after the flower tubs at the station. She plans to place tubs by the village hall war memorial and approval was granted for her to purchase plants for them, receipt costs refundable by the CC. **PA Action.** h. A letter to the CC from Gledfield School Parent Council requesting funding will be answered indicating the better approach of applying to the Beinn Tharsuinn Fund with appropriate advice. **PO Action.**

**Item 17. Beinn Tharsuinn funding applications (private session).** The following awards were approved at the private session.

Invercharron Highland Games - £2,000 for the purchase and delivery of a storage container.

Kyle of Sutherland Heritage Society - £950 to commission and erect direction signage at the Heritage Centre.

**Item 18. Date of next meeting.** The next meeting will be held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2012 at 7pm in Ardgay Community Hall. PA will book the hall. **PA Action.**

Meeting closed at 9.10pm.